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Poultry and Products

Avian Influenza – Update

2005

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Report Highlights:

Avian Influenza H5 virus spread outside the Danube Delta, raising the total number of outbreaks to 19 in 5 counties (Braila, Buzau, Calarasi, Tulcea, Ialomita). Biosecurity programs and safeguard measures are rigorously observed in commercial poultry farms in order to prevent infection. Monitoring and Surveillance Program continue for both wild and domestic birds.

Includes PSD Changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Unscheduled Report

Sofia [BU1]

[RO]

Bird Flu is spreading beyond the Danube Delta

During October, the H5 virus was limited to birds living in the Danube Delta, Tulcea county. With the increasing number of migratory birds flying over Romania in November and December, the virus spread outside this region.

--- Braila County

On November 26, the AI virus H5 was isolated in samples collected from one hen from a backyard farm in Scarlatesti village (Ciresu Locality), Braila county. This was the first AI outbreak detected outside the Danube Delta region of Romania. The village has about 400 households with an estimated number of 15,000 domestic birds. The eradication policy was applied and the village was placed under quarantine. All birds were culled and incinerated. During the week of December 19, *sentinel* chickens will be placed in the affected backyard farms.

More birds signaled AI presence in Braila county on December 1, as samples from two hens from Bumbacari village (Dudesti locality) and one hen from Dudescu village (Zavoaia locality) tested positive for AI during the serological tests. The latest two villages are located very close to Scarlatesti, the first AI outbreak in Braila county. Laboratory results from Weybridge, UK indicated later on December 15, that the birds were infected with the same highly pathogenic strain H5N1. During the eradication procedure, about 8,100 birds were culled, burned and buried (8,000 birds in Dudescu village and about 100 birds in Bumbacari village).

On December 4, 2005, another village in Braila county was put under quarantine, as samples from Ciocile locality tested H5 positive. The OIE Reference Laboratory in Weybridge confirmed on December 15 that the samples contain Influenza A subtype H5N1. About 5,000 birds were culled in the process of cleaning and disinfection of the outbreak. Later, on December 20, the National Laboratory isolated the H5 virus in samples collected from another village, Chichinetu, which belongs to Ciocile.

On December 8, 2005, first tests indicated the possible presence of AI in samples collected from dead hens which belonged to three backyard farms in Zavoaia Locality. As mortality was limited to three premises and a protection area has been set, a partial eradication was possible and applied.

On December 12, Tataru village, Dudesti locality was put under quarantine as samples indicated possible AI infection. Stamping-out policy was applied to the village and premises were disinfected.

--- Tulcea County

On December 1, 2005, samples from five live hens and three hen corps in Periprava village, Tulcea county, tested H5 positive. Stamping-out policy was applied. Laboratory results from Weybridge, UK indicated later on December 15, that the birds were infected with the same highly pathogenic strain H5N1. During the same day, 50 *sentinel* chickens were placed in the affected backyard farms.

In Tulcea county, Avian Flu continued to spread and few days later, on December 4, few samples collected from backyard farms from Agighiol village (Valea Nucarilor locality) and Crisan village turned out positive during the quick tests. Laboratory results from Weybridge, UK confirmed on December 15, that the birds from Agighiol were infected with the same highly pathogenic strain H5N1. Stamping-out policy was applied as well and premises were

disinfected. During the week of December 19, the affected backyard farms from Agighiol and Crisan will be populated with *sentinel* chickens.

--- Buzau County

The third county affected by Avian Flu was Buzau, which is located in the surveillance area along the migratory birds corridor. On December 11, samples from five live birds (one hen and four ducks) from one backyard farm from Padina locality tested H5 positive. The entire flock of Padina consists of 47,000 poultry.

On December 12, one more village, Braiesti was put under quarantine as samples indicated possible AI infection. The next day, another village Valea Fantanii, Odaile Locality, which is located near Braiesti village, received the same veterinary treatment, as H5 infection was determined.

Unlike the other villages affected by Avian Flu, located near lakes or along the rivers, Braiesti and Odaile are situated in a mountain area, relatively far from the possible route of migratory birds. Thus, source of infection remains unconfirmed. In an effort to limit the AI multiplication, the Ministry of Agriculture banned transportation of birds by public transportation means in all counties affected by AI.

--- Calarasi County

Avian Flu continued spreading and the fourth county was included in the group of AI affected counties, Calarasi. On December 13, 2005, H5 virus was identified on samples of dead birds from Tonea village, Modelu locality, Calarasi county. All birds from the affected backyards and the ones in their vicinity were culled and incinerated. The outbreak in Modelu is located just few kilometers far from one of the largest commercial poultry farms, Avicola Calarasi. In order to prevent infection, the poultry workers living in Modelu and working for Avicola Calarasi were temporarily forbidden to enter the poultry farms.

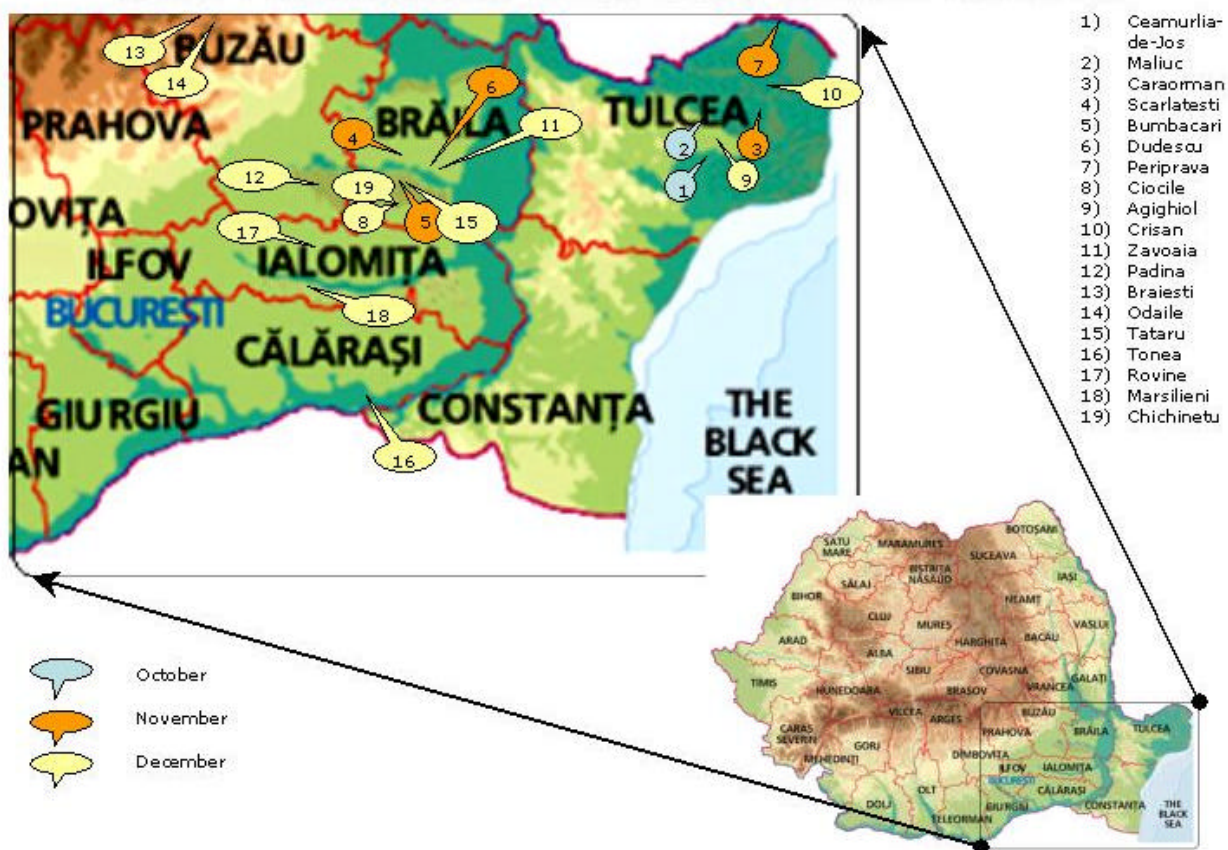
--- Ialomita County

Ialomita is the fifth county affected by Avian Flu. On December 15, samples from two cocks in village Rovine, Reviga locality indicated possible AI virus presence. A couple of days later, birds from five backyard farms from village Marsilienii, Albesti locality, tested AI positive following the rapid tests. The confirmatory results are expected from the Animal Health and Diagnosis Institute. However, the villages were immediately put under quarantine, and all birds will be killed while premises will be disinfected. Similar to all previous cases, all bird owners receive compensations for their losses.

Extinguished outbreaks

After 38 days since the AI virus was detected, Ceamurlia-de-Jos village was officially declared free of virus and the quarantine restrictions were lifted on November 11, 2005, as the *sentinel* chickens survived. On November 21, 2005, the second outbreak in Maliuc was officially extinguished. Three of the *sentinel* chickens had died, but the laboratory tests indicated the cause was the respiratory Avian Mycoplasmosis.

Avian Flu Outbreaks in Domestic Birds in Romania



More migratory birds test positive for Avian Influenza

On November 21, the AI virus was isolated in samples collected from several migratory birds in the Danube Delta, that is 5 summer swans in Muzura Gulf, near Sulina, and 3 birds (one water hen and 2 summer swans) in Obretinul Mic village. Confirmation results are expected from Weybridge Lab., United Kingdom.

As the above positive cases were migratory birds far from villages, they were considered isolated cases and no locality in the vicinity was placed under quarantine.

Monitoring and Surveillance Program continue

Currently the birds migration is on peak, thus the Romanian Veterinary authority anticipates additional outbreaks along the migratory corridor. This is also favored by the warm weather and plenty of food the wild birds can find on their flying route. Ministry of Agriculture recently decided to ban hunting of all species in the following counties Braila, Buzau, Calarasi, Ialomita and Vaslui, while live birds movement was prohibited throughout the country.

The monitoring program for wild birds, the restriction of live birds movement outside the backyard and clinical examination of domestic birds continue. Authorities became more concerned as some of the villages affected by Avian Flu are located very close to large

commercial poultry farms. They later continue to strictly follow their bio-security programs and implement all possible measures to prevent infection with AI.

Poultry meat consumption

According to the Romanian Poultry Producers Association, poultry meat sales are 40% lower than September 2005, one month before the first AI case was detected in Danube Delta. Traditionally, poultry meat consumption is lower during this period of the year, as Romanian consumers prefer pork meat for Holidays. The poultry average monthly domestic production is about 20,000 MT, while imports reach about 13,000 MT/month.